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## Has Banning Horse Slaughter Done Anything to the Economy?

### How horse slaughter affected the economy

did the close of horse slaughter in the U.S. really affect more than just people buying and selling horses for a profit? Unquestionably, according to Mykel Taylor and Elizabeth Sieverkropp in their essay, "The Impacts of U.S. Horse Slaughter Plant Closures on a Western Regional Horse Market", Taylor and Sieverkropp explain just how the horse market has been impacted since the closing of slaughter. It is stated that the estimated negative impact on the economy would be between \$20-\$29 million dollars in 2005, this is two years before the last horse slaughter plant closed. The estimated amount only takes away from the salvage value. Salvage value is what the meat buyers will pay per pound of meat on the horse. It was believed that because the U.S. would no longer be exporting horse meat, there would be another \$26 million to negatively impact the economy. Six years after this negative impact was estimated, the Government Accountability Office collected data to see how the closing of horse slaughter had affected the prices of horses. Unsurprisingly, the value of horses dropped dramatically. There was a -24% - -8% drop in prices of horses. This means the prices dropped between 600 to 1400 dollars. So, this being said, the claims that closing slaughter did not negatively impact the horse market appear to be untrue. Though 600 - 1400 dollars may not sound like much, for people making a living off of buying and selling horses they are losing thousands. Think of it like a dollar an hour cut on your salary, it doesn't sound like much, but in the end, you are losing hundreds, if not thousands of dollars on each pay check. So now that slaughter is closed, why is it so hard to get rid of an unwanted horse? An unwanted horse being a horse that is not seen useful to its owner anymore. This includes, but is not limited to the horse lacking in performance, old, crippled, dangerous, or even a family that can no longer afford it. In "It costs how much to get rid of my horse?! Why the economic down turn has illustrated the need for horse slaughter facilities" by Brenna Koehler we learn just why it is so hard to sell unwanted horses.. Koehler acknowledges that America's history with the wild west is a great reason for why we do not like to see horses slaughtered, but she also states that many horses are greatly neglected and left to suffer when an owner can no longer care for them. It is easy to see that America is in a financial crisis, so for horses, who live twenty years or

more, it can make a rough life for them. Koehler talks of how rescues are overflowing and now slaughter is not readily available to help with that overflow. It is this combination that has left many horses abandoned just so the owners can make ends meet. She states, "Banning an evil does not always create the ideal solution."(Koehler) And how true that is.

Aren't there other options besides slaughter for unwanted horses?

Why other options are no longer working in place of horse slaughter

“When it comes to government action, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Hold down gasoline prices to help motorists, and you create shortages. Punish landlords to protect tenants, and apartments get harder to find. Invade Iraq to spread freedom, and you get civil war.” (Chapman) Steve Chapman goes on to say in his article “What’s Worse Than Horse Slaughter” is that because something looks good or sounds good, doesn’t make it the right decision. Change can look dangerous and may appear that it will not work but it is actually in place to try and make good. Horse slaughter is one of those changes. Chapman states that the welfare of horses isn’t just something that a bill can fix and that closing horse slaughter has ultimately caused more mistreatment and abuse to these animals more than it has done good for them. Chapman also points out ways that owners have tried to get rid of horses using rescues, euthanasia, et cetera. However, it ultimately isn’t the best way. He states: “Horses don't live forever, and they rarely have the luxury of expiring in their sleep, surrounded by their loved ones. When one is old or injured or ill-tempered, the proprietor may not want the expense of feeding, housing and medicating it. Owners can turn their livestock over to horse rescue operations, which will take care of them. But these services have trouble keeping up with the need. Horses can also be professionally euthanized, but that can cost upward of \$200 each, not to mention more hundreds to dispose of the carcass. Selling the beasts at auction -- often to buyers who will send them to slaughter -- used to be an option, allowing owners to turn a cost into a few hundred dollars in income. But the demise of slaughterhouses reduced the demand for low-quality horses, cutting the price sellers could get. It would be nice if owners would either keep their old nags or have them put down. But that isn't always how things go. Horses are still being sold to be converted to table fare.” (Chapman) Furthermore, if horse slaughter has been banned within the United States, how is it that horses are still being sent to slaughter? They are being sent to Mexico and Canada where they meet the same fate they would have in the United States, only now they are traveling hundred of miles with no food and water, some not even making it off the truck. The meat from these horses is then exported to European and Asian markets from those slaughterhouses in Mexico and Canada. This is what we learn from

“Pets Or Livestock? A Moral Divide Over Horse Slaughter” by Frank Morris. It is brought up by one of the people interviewed for this article that horses are said to suffer more at a slaughterhouse than other animals. It is noted that “the meat is dangerous, since horses can be treated with drugs not allowed in animals raised specifically for food.” (Morris) However, Morris has another very different perspective going on in his article. It states, ““Chickens for eggs, lambs for wool, cows for milk, horses for work, and when their useful, productive life has passed, then you turn them into meat,””(Morris) This is coming from an owner of over a dozen horses. ““I really love horses. But when they're no good to me, what are you going to do with them? We don't want to take 'em out back and shoot 'em," he says. "They may just as well be slaughtered, and get some use out of them.””(Morris) USA Today shared in their story, “Oklahoma Lifts Horse Slaughter Ban”, that earlier in 2013, Oklahoma had decided to lift horse slaughter bans. The reason Oklahoma has decided this is because it will be more humane for the horses that are being abandoned and ultimately starving to death. Slaughter is also believed to be inhumane outside of the country and they believe lifting the bans could fix the abuse and neglect for horses in the state as well as in the country. Slaughter in the United States, unlike Mexico and Canada can be regulated. If an inhumane act is performed, the slaughterhouse can be shut down immediately. “Horse slaughter is a tricky issue”(Smiley), this is coming from Jane Smiley in her article “Why Horse Slaughter is Necessary”, Smiley is an equine veterinarian, and she is completely right with that statement. Horses live a long time and so their lives are in the hands of their owners, and a horse is not a cheap animal to have. In fact it is extremely expensive to own one, so for many horse owners that can no longer afford their horses the only option for the horse, if not sellable, is death. Which usually is by starvation. People seem to have it in their mind that horses, once wild will always have those instincts, so people turn them out to fend for themselves. Unfortunately, horses have become so domesticated that when turned out they don’t know how to scavenge for food or water and ultimately just die. Horses are not human, their size makes it nearly impossible to bury them and cremation is expensive and done by very few people. So, their bodies should be used, for they cannot be disposed of easily. A horse that is sent to slaughter will have all parts of its body used and properly disposed of, at no cost to its owner. Euthanasia, on the other hand is completely at cost to the owner, including

the expense of disposal. Slaughter, then should seem like a reasonable option for most, unfortunately more people see horses as pets than working livestock. When all is said and done, as of January 17, 2014, there was a stop put on horse slaughter due to President Obama signing a bill that withholds all money required to a FDA inspection. This information is coming from Barry Massey in "Horse Slaughter Blocked by Federal Law". It has caused loss of hope for horse slaughter in the United States to reopen due to the inspections being necessary to export meat overseas. The article quotes ""This clear message from Washington echoes the opinions of an overwhelming number of Americans from coast to coast: horse slaughter is abhorrent and unacceptable," said Matt Bershadker, president and CEO of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."" (Massey) If our voices caused a shut down of slaughter, think of what we could do when we rise again to reopen it. In 2013 a horse slaughter plant in New Mexico was supposed to open upon getting a grant for an FDA inspection. This inspection however was put on a stand still when rallying anti-horse slaughter activists took the matter to court. It is said in USA Today's article "Appeals court: Horse slaughterhouses can reopen", "Attorneys for the plants have argued that the plaintiffs are simply in court because they are morally opposed to horse slaughter and are looking for a way to delay the plants while they lobby Congress for a ban. Proponents of a return to domestic horse slaughter point to a 2011 report from the federal Government Accountability Office that shows horse abuse and abandonment have increased since domestic horse slaughter was banned. They say it is better to slaughter the animals in humane, federally regulated facilities than have them abandoned to starve across the drought-stricken West or shipped to inhumane facilities in Mexico." (Clausing). In order to take a stand and rally against the closing of horse slaughter facilities in the U.S. each of us that are for can send a letter to our state senate in support of horse slaughter being reopened. As I stated before, anti-horse slaughter voices put a ban on this necessary evil, so using our voices we can reopen it again.

## Why Do We Need Horse Slaughter?

### Why we need horse slaughter in the US

Since the closing of the last horse slaughterhouse in the U.S. in 2007 the horse market has taken a drastic turn for the worst. It was believed by many animal activists that closing slaughterhouses would cease the animal abuse and slaughter of U.S. horses all together. Unfortunately, according to Equine Rescue France in their 2011 article “Why Horse Slaughter is Necessary”, the closing of slaughter did not reduce neglect and abuse, instead it caused a huge increase in the neglect and welfare cases for horses. In a report by the United States Government Accountability Office in their report to Congressional Committees called “Action Needed to Address Unintended Consequences from Cessation of Domestic Slaughter” it is stated, “Since domestic horse slaughter ceased in 2007, the slaughter horse market has shifted to Canada and Mexico. From 2006 through 2010, U.S. horse exports for slaughter increased by 148 and 660 percent to Canada and Mexico, respectively. As a result, nearly the same number of U.S. horses was transported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter in 2010—nearly 138,000—as was slaughtered before domestic slaughter ceased.” This being said, banning horse slaughter within the United States did nothing for the ill fate of the horses being slaughtered, it has ultimately forced them to have to endure a much more treacherous journey across borders until they meet their final fate. Slaughterhouses closing in the U.S. has also caused horses to be given away for free or sold for very low prices due to it altering the supply-to-demand ratio. This in turn has affected myself, and countless others, who make a living off of buying horses, training them, and then selling them for a profit. Instead, people can now get free or cheap horses, and for uneducated people buying a first horse they think this is the best way to go. Overbreeding is a huge factor in what has caused this over population of horses and by removing the most effective method of alleviate unwanted horse, people trying to make a living in the horse market are feeling the backlash everyday.